

Exhibit 3

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How eclipses feature in major world religions

Some Christians believe there was an eclipse during the crucifixion, and Muslims believe one happened the day Prophet Muhammad's son died.



Juniper Panjaitan cheers while holding his son Ferrel, 6, as they watch the peak of annular solar eclipse on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science in Dallas. (Shafkat Anowar / Staff Photographer)

By [Joy Ashford](#)

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Editor's note: This story is part of The Dallas Morning News' coverage of the 2024 total solar eclipse. For more, visit dallasnews.com/eclipse.

[Throughout history](#), people have looked to faith to make sense of [eclipses](#) like the one that will plunge Dallas into total darkness for almost four minutes on April 8. Some of the world's major religions still assign significance to eclipses, whether as a bad omen or a call to prayer. Here's how eclipses — or possible references to them — have featured in Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

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Christianity

Some Christians and scientists believe an eclipse occurred during the crucifixion of Jesus because three of the Bible's four Gospels mention a three-hour period of darkness as Jesus died.

A leading proponent of this idea is Colin Humphreys, a British physicist and author of *The Mystery of the Last Supper: Reconstructing the Final Days of Jesus*. In a [1984](#) research paper in *Nature*, Humphreys and his co-author published new calculations that they argued showed a lunar eclipse could have been visible from Jerusalem during the crucifixion. "It improves the historical basis of our faith," Humphreys said of the conclusion, which he says dates Jesus' death to April 3 in A.D. 33.

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[Later calculations](#) have challenged Humphreys' findings, said John Dvorak, author of *Mask of the Sun: The Science, History and Forgotten Lore of Eclipses*. The question of whether an eclipse occurred during the crucifixion has been debated for centuries, Dvorak said, and will likely be discussed for years to come.

A famous story of the sun "standing still" in the Bible's Book of Joshua has also been interpreted by some Christian scholars as a reference to a solar eclipse.

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Schools in the path of April's total solar eclipse prepare for a natural teaching moment

For schools in or near the path of totality of the April 8 eclipse, the event has inspired lessons in science, literacy and culture. Some schools also are organizing group viewings for students to experience the awe of daytime darkness and learn about the astronomy behind it together.



See the total solar eclipse of 2024 at one of these watch parties in Dallas-Fort Worth

Here's a list of total solar eclipse watch parties planned in Dallas, Fort Worth and surrounding cities on April 8, 2024. North Texas will be a prime spot for viewing the eclipse.



Could a rare 'devil comet' be visible in D-FW skies during the total eclipse?

As the April 8 solar eclipse looms closer, another celestial object has garnered attention: Comet 12P/Pons-Brooks, also called the "devil comet" because of its hornlike silhouette, is making its first appearance in 71 years.



Rental car bookings and rates skyrocket ahead of total solar eclipse

Dallas will soon be one of the biggest gathering spots for tourists hoping to catch a glimpse of the total solar eclipse and that's sending the price of rental cars to the moon. Nearly every rental car agency is sold out for the April 8 event and the few cars that are left are demanding rates of \$600 a day and higher.

Hinduism

Alok Kumar, a retired physics professor and the author of *Ancient Hindu Science: Its Transmission and Impact on World Cultures*, said several Hindu texts contain a story that

explains why eclipses happen. In the story, the decapitated head of the demon Rahu chases the sun and moon and sometimes eats them. But because the demon has no body, the sun and moon are able to pass through him, and reappear in the sky.

The story is rooted in early scientific observations of eclipses, Kumar said. “Hindus have always found a story around their scientific findings,” he said. “Because it’s a lot easier to remember a story than to remember just scattered information.”

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Hindus generally believe eclipses are a bad omen, Kumar said. Many Hindus pray during an eclipse, he said, and some purify themselves by showering afterward.

Islam

The Hadith, a collection of sayings and deeds attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, includes a story of Muhammad observing an eclipse.

“There was only one solar eclipse that occurred during his lifetime, and it coincided with the day that his son died,” said Yasir Qadhi, a resident scholar at the East Plano Islamic Center.

The prophet gave a speech telling people “the sun and the moon are creations of God; they do not eclipse because of the birth or the death of any human,” Qadhi said. “This is one of the most powerful signs that he was sincere, that he didn’t take advantage of a potential miracle because he wanted to teach the truth.”

Many Muslims say a special prayer during an eclipse, and Qadhi’s mosque is one of several in the area that plans to hold gatherings for this prayer, he said. The eclipse prayer is the only Islamic prayer where devotees bow twice in each cycle of postures instead of once, Qadhi said, as “a show of extra reverence in light of this majestic miracle.”

Judaism

The Talmud, a collection of teachings, commentaries and debates from rabbis, includes a passage on solar eclipses that has confounded even the most revered scholars, said Dr. Jeremy Brown, who has written books on the intersections of science and Judaism and runs a blog called [Talmudology](#).

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“Today, I think it’s fair to say that nobody takes this literally,” Brown said of the passage, which attributes solar eclipses to [causes including](#) homosexuality and two brothers being killed together.

“If Rashi couldn’t understand this and couldn’t come up with a unifying theory of what’s going on, I certainly can’t,” Brown said, referencing the influential Jewish medieval commentator Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac.

Brown also said that some Jews say prayers of blessing during eclipses.

He will speak virtually at an April 7-8 [event](#) hosted by the Dallas Community Kollel and focused on Jewish perspectives on the solar eclipse.

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Joy Ashford covers faith and religion in North Texas for The Dallas Morning News through a partnership with Report for America.

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